



The NUNES Report

Nunes leads 'fair share' charge for Valley

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Congressional report shows lack of federal investment in Central Valley

Six Valley congressmen released a preliminary federal report that shows an eight-county area of the San Joaquin Valley persistently gets the short end of the federal funding stick.

In a joint press conference via satellite from Washington, D.C., Reps. Devin Nunes, Dennis Cardoza, George Radanovich, and Jim Costa said the Central Valley region ranks below historically impoverished regions around the nation, yet doesn't get the same level of federal investment.

Some of the basic findings include:

Per capita federal direct expenditures and obligations to the San Joaquin Valley were \$4,736 for fiscal year 2002, compared to per capita federal direct expenditures and obligations to the United States were \$6,814 for fiscal year 2002. That means that the San Joaquin Valley got \$2,000 less per capita compared to the national average.

The report also showed that the 2000 poverty rate for the San Joaquin Valley (20.5%) was significantly



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higher than the national rate (12.4%) and California (14.2%).

The final report, which will pool data from multiple sources and provide relevant analysis, will be released several weeks from now. The preliminary results, while not surprising, do begin to lay a foundation by which the lawmakers can begin to affect budget decisions as Congress enters its appropriations season.

"The data included in the report reflect what many in the Valley suspected: That the Central Valley continues to have many needs, and that we need more federal funding," said Ways and Means Committee Chairman Bill Thomas, R-Bakersfield. "I will continue to work with my colleagues to improve the Central Valley's, and California's, share of federal fund-

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Where's my refund?

Taxpayers can check on the status of their individual Federal tax refund by visiting the "Where's My Refund" section of the IRS web site, www.irs.gov.

To ensure privacy, the IRS requires taxpayers to enter three pieces of personal information: SSN, filing status, and the exact whole dollar refund amount shown on the return. The system will tell taxpayers if the IRS has received their return, if there is a problem, and when the refund was deposited or mailed.

Taxpayers without internet access can call the IRS Refund Hotline at 1-800-829-1954.

Nunes announces \$3.94 million grant for Visalia

The Department of Commerce has awarded a \$3.94 million grant to the city of Visalia to build a new parking garage in conjunction with the expansion of Kaweah Delta Health Care District Hospital, Rep. Devin Nunes announced.

“It took a lot of leg work to get this grant done, but it was well worth the effort,” Rep. Nunes said. “It is critical that the parking structure is completed in time for the opening of a new medical tower the hospital will build in the near future.”

The federal grant will help pay for a 44,000-square-foot parking garage with approximately 695 spaces located directly across Acequia Street from the proposed new medical tower.

Rep. Nunes met with

officials from the Commerce Department’s Economic Development Administration about the grant and urged them to quickly release it to the city.

“This is very good news for both the city of Visalia and Kaweah Delta District Hospital. We have worked very hard with hospital officials to make their expansion in the downtown area possible,” Visalia Mayor Bob Link said.

“With this federal grant, we can ensure the continued success of the hospital as well as maintain a vibrant downtown for our residents. I believe the City Council and Hospital Board deserve much credit for their collaboration on this vision. I also appreciate the hard work Congressman Devin Nunes did on this project for us.”



A multi-story parking garage in downtown Visalia is critical to the planned expansion of the Kaweah Delta Healthcare District Hospital.

The hospital is the largest employer in the vibrant downtown area. City officials have worked hard over the years to retain the hospital campus in the city center.

Porterville Fire Dept. gets federal grant

The Porterville Fire Department is getting a \$176,494 federal grant for equipment and safety needs, Rep. Devin Nunes (R-Tulare) announced.

The fire assistance grant is one of several given to communities in Tulare County in the past couple of years. The Assistance to Firefighters Grant Program (AFGP) awards one-year grants directly to fire departments to support the nation’s firefighters and the services they deliver.

“Fire prevention and protection is one of the basic and most critical services local governments provide to their citizens. I am glad we are able to help them carry out their missions with the

right kind of training and safety equipment,” Rep. Nunes said.



The grant to Porterville is part of \$750 million in direct assistance to firefighters to improve the effectiveness of firefighting operations, fire-

fighter health and safety programs, and to establish or expand fire prevention programs throughout the United States. The Department of Homeland Security’s Office for Domestic Preparedness (ODP) administers the program, in cooperation with the U.S. Fire Administration.

The grant award comes just days before Rep. Nunes hosts a workshop to help local fire fighting agencies gain a competitive advantage in applying for their share of more than \$600 million in federal grants this coming year.

Page applications available

Rep. Devin Nunes is looking for an outstanding high school student in Fresno or Tulare County to spend part of the summer as a Page in



the House of Representatives.

This unique program gives students the opportunity to meet students from around the country, attend special classes and seminars at the Page School, and

serve the country's leaders while working in the House of Representatives.

There are two summer sessions: June 13-July 1 and July 11-29. The application can be obtained online at www.nunes.house.gov. The application must be received no later than March 25 at 5 p.m. Applications will be reviewed and a successful candidate will be forwarded to the Speaker of the House for consideration in either session.

If you or someone you know are interested in applying for a House Page position you can download the appropriate application forms from the congressman's website on the constituent services page.

Art competition seeks students

Rep. Devin Nunes is looking for the best high school artist in Fresno and Tulare counties to display their artwork on Capitol Hill for a year.

The winner of "An Artistic Discovery" competition from the 21st Congressional District will get round-trip airfare for three to Washington, D.C. for a national reception to honor young artists throughout the country and view their artwork at the nation's capitol.

"From previous art competitions I know that we have many talented young artists here in the 21st Congressional District," Rep. Devin Nunes said.

The deadline to submit artwork to the congress-



Above: Last year's winner was a charcoal sketch by Clovis East student Alicia Salas.

man's Clovis or Visalia offices is April 8, 2005. Specific guidelines for the artwork, including acceptable dimensions and categories, can be obtained by calling Rep. Nunes' office at (559) 733-3861, or logging on to the constituent services page.

The entries will be judged by a distinguished panel of local art experts.

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ing."

Rep. Dennis Cardoza agreed.

"The Central Valley is being shortchanged by the federal government," said Rep. Dennis Cardoza, D-Merced. "With an exploding population, it's time to pull people together to coordinate a plan of action and make the most of our resources in order to address our problems."

Rep. Richard Pombo praised the study.

"This study gives us a good baseline assessment and solidifies the case for more funding," said Resources Committee Chairman Richard Pombo, R-Tracy. "More important, we must focus on projects already in the works that will better the lives of the people living in the Central Valley. We must create transporta-

tion solutions, which will lead to access to better jobs and improve the overall economy."

Rep. Devin Nunes added: "Considering the challenges we face here in the Central Valley with chronic, high unemployment and pervasive poverty, we have been overlooked for federal investment and assistance," said Rep. Devin Nunes, R-Visalia. "I think it is unrealistic to ask for new money to level the playing field. What we need to do is make sure the San Joaquin Valley is getting its fair share of existing federal dollars that are already allocated."

But even as the report details ongoing problems in the eight-county region, the lawmakers have already been involved in efforts to reverse the federal funding trend. Last year, the law-

makers joined forces to strengthen a Clinton-era Executive Order mandating increased federal attention to the Central Valley. The changes to the Executive Order were signed by President George Bush and are being implemented by a federal task force.

The bipartisan group of lawmakers said they will use the information found in the new report by the Congressional Research Service (CRS) to leverage even greater help through the task force in the months and years to come.

The lawmakers also laid out an action plan to address issues raised in the report:

The congressmen have requested a meeting with officials at the White House to discuss the report and identify areas of priority.

For instances the report may be utilized the report to

advance a bill to include Hwy. 99 in the federal interstate system.

Each congressman will hold events in their districts to help local governments and agencies improve their efforts to apply for and receive federal grants and contracts.

Congressman Nunes concluded.

"Highway 99 is the economic umbilical cord for the Central Valley to the greater commercial centers in northern and southern California," said Rep. Nunes, who introduced the bill last month. "As a coalition of lawmakers, we can make the improvements needed to ensure the continued growth of industry and jobs here at home."

Legislative issues abound early in second term

Agriculture

AgJOBS

Americans need and expect a stable, predictable, legal work force in American agriculture. Willing American workers deserve a system that puts them first in line for available jobs with fair, market wages. All workers deserve decent treatment and protection of basic rights under the law. Consumers deserve a safe, stable, domestic food supply. American citizens and taxpayers deserve secure borders, a safe homeland, and a government that works. Yet we are being threatened on all these fronts, because of a growing shortage of legal workers in agriculture. To address these challenges, a bipartisan group of Members of Congress, including Congressman Nunes, have introduced HR 884 the Agricultural Job Opportunity, Benefits, and Security (AgJOBS) Act of 2005. This bipartisan effort builds upon years of discussion and suggestions among growers, farm worker advocates, Latino and immigration issue advocates, Members of both parties in both Houses of Congress, and others.

Dairy

Congressman Nunes co-sponsored H.R. 521, the Milk Import Tariff Equity Act. The bill seeks to prevent the unrestricted importation of dairy proteins. Milk Protein Concentrates are relatively new to the market and were not included in the General Agreement of Trade and Tariffs, as the ultra-filtration technology did not

exist. H.R. 521 is supported by the National Milk Producers Federation, the American Farm Bureau Federation, the National Farmers Organization, the National Grange and the National Council of Farmer Cooperatives.

Defense- Veterans

Iwo Jima

February 19, 2005, marked the 60th anniversary of the D-Day landings by



members of the United States Marine Corps on the island of Iwo Jima during World War II. In recognition of this important date in our nation's history, Congressman Nunes co-sponsored House Resolution 119. The resolution commends the brave soldiers who participated in this important battle and enshrines our nation's commitment to the memory of those who gave their lives during the battle.

Housing

Real Estate Brokerage and Management

Congressman Nunes became a cosponsor of H.R. 111, the Community Choice in Real Estate Act authored by Rep. Calvert (R-CA). This bill would ensure that real estate brokerage and management activities are clearly and definitively de-

finied as commercial activities and not financial matters. Basically, banks and other similar financial institutions would not be able to conduct operations that have historically been operated by real estate companies.

Judicial

Firearms Manufacturers Protection

Rep. Nunes became an original cosponsor of H.R. 800, the Firearms Manufacturers Protection Bill authored by Rep. Stearns (R-FL). This bill would protect gun and ammunition manufacturers from civil lawsuits based on the criminal or unlawful third-party misuse of firearms. Without question, this common sense proposal will cut down on the amount of unnecessary litigation in our judicial system, and make individuals who choose to break the law ultimately liable for their actions, not companies that make or sell firearms.

Transportation

Agriculture Transportation

Congressman Nunes co-sponsored H.R. 572, which will provide a comprehensive definition of the term "agricultural commodity" in the National Highway Safety Designation Act. Currently, this term is not clearly defined and has been subject to varying interpretations. This bill will also provide exemptions from the federal hours of service regulations for truck drivers who are engaged in the transportation of agricultural

commodities and supplies.

State Route 130

Rep. Richard Pombo recently introduced H.R. 723, which directs the Secretary of Transportation to study the feasibility of constructing a new highway connecting State Route 130 in Santa Clara with Interstate Route 5 in San Joaquin County. Recognizing the need for additional infrastructure to support increasing traffic between the Central Valley and the Bay Area, Mr. Nunes co-sponsored the bill.

Water

Clean Water Act (404 Permits)

In a letter to Colonel Light, the Sacramento District Engineer for the Army Corps of Engineers, Rep. Nunes requested his personal attention to a jurisdictional determination under the Clean Water Act (CWA) for portions of the Tule and Kaweah rivers. This issue has been pending in Sacramento for some time now, and involves matters of policy significance that are important to the San Joaquin Valley. Specifically, Rep. Nunes is concerned about any application of the CWA that allows the Corps to exercise jurisdiction under a "tributary" theory on the basis of a pumping connection between two otherwise isolated water bodies. Rep. Nunes is not aware of any Corps regulation or court case that has applied such a theory of "tributary" for the purpose of jurisdictional determinations.